

yielded us a Russia that thinks and acts much like the old Soviet Union. Unfortunately, we can have little hope that the Clinton administration will meet this challenge with a reorientation of its Russia policy because this would be to admit that Ronald Reagan got it right on the cold war. After all, Strobe Talbott wrote in 1990 that the cold war doves were right all along, and he has been trying to prove this bizarre conclusion ever since.

Some of these naive policies can be overturned by us in Congress, Mr. Speaker, and I am hopeful we will. For instance, we can cut off aid, and I would urge support for my legislation, H.R. 519, that would do exactly that. We can back-burner START II, and I would urge the Senate to do that. And we can force the President to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, and I would urge everyone to cosponsor our colleague MARTIN HOKE's excellent bill, H.R. 2483, which would do exactly that.

The rest, alas, will have to wait for January 1997, when, hopefully, we will have a more clear-eyed team in the White House.

RESTORE COLA EQUITY FOR MILITARY RETIREES

HON. LINDA SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 1996

Mrs. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, today the House of Representatives passed legislation that is of utmost importance to the veterans who have honorably served our country. I'm speaking of the fiscal year 1996 Defense authorization bill that restores COLA equity between military and civilian retirees.

Historically, Congress treated Federal civilian and military pensioners the same under the law. However, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 contained a provision delaying Federal civilian retirees' COLAs until April for fiscal years 1994-96. In contrast, military retirees were delayed until April of 1994 and until October for fiscal year 1995-98. I found this to be a flawed policy. Inflation does not discriminate and neither should the U.S. Congress.

The bill we approved today restores COLA equity for military and civilian retirees. While the House approved this measure on December 15, it was vetoed by the President. We should not play politics with COLA's. A system which puts COLA's on different schedules for different groups is bad public policy. It is also a disservice to dedicated Americans who served this country, often in harm's way.

I urge the President to quickly sign this legislation. The veterans in Washington State deserve nothing less.

NORTHERN MARIANAS DELEGATE ACT

HON. ROBERT A. UNDERWOOD

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 1996

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, today I have introduced the Northern Marianas Delegate Act, to provide for a nonvoting Delegate to the House of Representatives to represent

the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands became the newest territory of the United States and an American commonwealth in 1976. This commonwealth is comprised of the northern islands in the Mariana Island chain, the principal islands being Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Guam is also a part of the Mariana Island chain, and it is fitting that the people of Guam have the honor today to share in the introduction of this bill for our Pacific neighbors, and for our brothers and sisters of Chamorro heritage in the Northern Marianas who share Guam's indigenous identity.

It is important that the Northern Marianas be accorded representation in Congress, not just for fair and just representation of an American community whose interests are affected by the actions of Congress, but more importantly for what the people of Northern Marianas can contribute to the Nation through their Delegate.

The American relationship with the Northern Marianas began just over 50 years ago when American forces fought on the beaches of Saipan and Tinian, and at great human cost expelled a colonial power that had acquired these islands as part of a Pacific empire. The Americans, in the years to come, established the seeds of democracy that have resulted in this new American commonwealth. This commonwealth, whose roots to America are traced to a violent military encounter in World War II, is the first American soil acquired by conquest in this century. That the people of the Northern Marianas have freely chosen to become a part of the American family is a great credit to the United States; that they do not enjoy full participation in the political process as citizens should be a matter of great concern to all of us.

Today the American citizens who live in the Northern Marianas contribute to the Nation and participate in the life of our Nation in all the same ways that every other American citizen does in his own community. They pay taxes, serve in the military and work hard for the progress of their communities. They are part of the fabric of our great Nation.

Participation in this American democracy is not based on a particular citizen's tax contribution to the Treasury and it is not based on a preordained size of a community. It is based on a community's commitment to our democratic form of government and our Nation. Our American citizenship has as its foundation a promise of fair and equal treatment by our Government and that promise extends to Congress where fair and equal treatment demands that the Northern Marianas be represented by a Delegate.

The bill that I have introduced today mirrors the legislation which granted Guam and the United States Virgin Islands representation in 1972 and the legislation which granted American Samoa representation in 1980. The Northern Marianas will join the ranks of Delegates representing these islands, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia, and the Northern Marianas will add its voice to those who represent American citizens who do not reside in the 50 states, but who do reside in a diverse group of American communities on American soil.

In introducing this bill today I commend the work of the Resident Representative of the

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Mr. Juan N. Babauta, and his staff. I also commend the unity of purpose in the leadership of the Northern Marianas expressed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 9-6 of the Ninth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, the Majors of Saipan, Tinian, Rota, and the Northern Islands, and the Municipal Councils of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota in the adoption of resolutions requesting the United States Congress to grant Delegate status to the Resident Representative to the United States. I further commend the leadership of the Honorable Diego T. Benavente, Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Honorable Jesus R. Sablan, President of the Senate of the 10th Commonwealth Legislature, as well as the Honorable Crispin I. DeLeon Guerrero, in their support of this bill. I hope that the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate will act on this legislation in this session, and I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the Northern Marianas Delegate Act.

TRIBUTE TO A.G. GASTON

HON. EARL F. HILLIARD

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 1996

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in tribute of Dr. A.G. Gaston, a leader among men, who recently died in Birmingham at the age of 103.

Dr. Gaston was a pioneer, who developed businesses in Alabama in an age when blacks simply did not do such things. Dr. Gaston was a pioneer in the area of building a business empire which propelled him to become Alabama's first black millionaire.

Dr. Gaston's life reads much like a literary rags-to-riches story. He was born on July 4, 1892, in Demopolis, AL, the grandson of slaves. Early in his life he moved to Birmingham and began working a variety of jobs before serving in the U.S. Army during World War I.

When the war was over, Dr. Gaston and his mother got the idea of starting their own business by preparing box lunches, and the rest is history.

From a meager beginning, Dr. Gaston eventually started a funeral business, from the funeral business emerged the Booker T. Washington Insurance Business in 1923, and from the insurance company came nine corporations with combined assets of more than \$35 million. Among Dr. Gaston's other corporate ventures were: Vulcan Realty & Investment Corp.; Citizen's Federal Savings & Loan; Zion Memorial Cemetery; Smith & Gaston Funeral Homes; Wenn & Wagg Radio Stations; A.G. Gaston Senior Citizens Home; Booker T. Washington Business College, and A.G. Gaston Motel & Lounge—now A.G. Gaston Gardens.

Dr. Gaston's interests were not limited to just his business ventures. Dr. Gaston is also well known as a trailblazer in the area of civil rights and equal justice for all men and women.

When Dr. King was in Birmingham, he stayed at the A.G. Gaston Hotel and when Dr. King was arrested and put in jail for marching for equality by Police Commissioner Bull Connor, it was Dr. Gaston who bailed him out, so he could continue his fight for freedom.